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# MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES

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## THE SOURCES OF *THE TEMPEST*

Because it had been Shakespeare's unvarying custom for many years to dramatise some story which had been already told, it is customary to suppose that he did not invent even the very slight plot about which *The Tempest* is built. No play has been more discussed in this connection, and none has yielded a larger number of sources for individual passages or features than this sourceless comedy. Especially the storm and ship-wreck from which the play receives its name has been discussed and rediscussed; and the vitality of the problem is still unimpaired, if we may judge from the recent contributions to it by Mr. Rudyard Kipling,<sup>1</sup> Professor Gayley,<sup>2</sup> and Professor Rea.<sup>3</sup>

But it is not with any description of the storm that I am now concerned. The main source of the drama has never been found, or at least it has never been agreed upon. Most critics have regarded *Die Schöne Sidea* merely as an analogue, perhaps going back to the same source from which *The Tempest* was taken. Whether this is so, or some fellow actor who had been in Nuremberg in 1604 or 1606 told Shakespeare the plot of the German play, *The Fair Sidea* could account only for the merest outlines of the story. In 1885 Edmund Dorer called attention<sup>4</sup> to a collection of Spanish stories, *Noches de Invierno* ('Winter Nights')

<sup>1</sup> "How Shakespeare Came to Write 'The Tempest,'" London *Spectator*, July 2, 1898. In *A Book of Homage to Shakspeare*, 1916, and, with valuable introduction by Professor Thorndike, in the Publications of the Dramatic Museum of Columbia University, 1916.

<sup>2</sup> *Shakespeare and the Founders of Liberty in America*, 1917.

<sup>3</sup> *Modern Philology*, September, 1919.

<sup>4</sup> In the *Magazin für die Litteratur des In- und Auslandes*, CVII, 77.

by Antonio de Eslava, of which the fourth chapter contains some fundamental similarities to the story of *The Tempest*. In 1905 Mr. Joseph de Perott put forward the claims of another Spanish romance, *Espejo de Príncipes y Caballeros*, translated 1579-1601 as *The Mirrour of Princely Deeds and of Knighthood*, which was very popular at the time.<sup>5</sup> In the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* for 1907 Dr. Gustav Becker set aside Mr. de Perott's contentions in favor of Dorer's, and suggested a common source for Eslava and Shakespeare;<sup>6</sup> whereupon Mr. de Perott contended that Eslava and Shakespeare drew upon different variants of the *Mirrour of Knighthood*, and proceeded to exploit its claims in English, Spanish, German, and Italian.<sup>7</sup>

This, I believe, brings down to date the suggested sources for *The Tempest*, so far as the love plot and the treachery intrigues are concerned. What must be evident to everyone who examines the question carefully is that none of them is adequate for the play as a whole, and that they are all alike in leaving the Caliban conspiracy unprovided for. Surely so small a matter might be left to Shakespeare's own invention; and if the source of the main plot were obvious and none for the Caliban-Stephano-Trinculo story were forthcoming, we should say no more about it. But just the reverse is true. I think it can be shown that the Caliban subplot was derived directly from a well-defined group of *commedia dell'arte* scenarios, which present at the same time a dramatic framework much closer to that of *The Tempest* than is either the *Noches de Invierno* or *Die Schöne Sidea*. My contention will be, there-

<sup>5</sup> See Jusserand, *A Literary History of the English People*, II, 496, 498, 515, III, 396. It is rather curious that it is not mentioned in most of the larger histories of English literature.

<sup>6</sup> We have no indication that the *Noches de Invierno* was translated into English in Shakespeare's time. A German translation was published in 1666; but Becker's more literal translation of the fourth chapter, the story of King Dardano and his daughter Serafina, aroused for the first time a general interest in the subject. For a short summary of this story see Herbert E. Greene's Introduction in the Tudor Shakespeare. I agree fully with Dr. Greene that "this tale can hardly be the immediate source of *The Tempest*."

<sup>7</sup> *The Probable Source of the Plot of Shakespeare's Tempest*, Publications of the Clark University Library, 1905; *Cultura Española*, XII, 1023 (1908) and xv, 733 (1909); *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, XLVII, 128 (1911); *Romantic Review*, v, 364 (1914); *Studi di Filologia Moderna*, VII, 271 (1914).

fore, that these scenarios furnish at last the basic source of *The Tempest*.

In the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* for 1910 is an article by Max J. Wolff on "Shakespeare und die Commedia dell'Arte" which traces in detail all the analogies the writer can find between Shakespeare's humorous situations and those which the travelling Italian companies may have presented in London. We have references to the frequent appearance of these Italian companies, but we have no record of what plays or impromptu scenarios they may have performed.<sup>8</sup> Wolff makes a remarkable showing, and fully justifies his conclusion that there is scarcely a comedy of Shakespeare which does not show somewhere this Italian influence. But when he comes to *The Tempest* he has nothing of the least consequence to offer.

Wolff, however, while apparently exhausting the possibilities in Scala's collection, did not make use of an unedited manuscript to which attention has more recently been called by Ferdinando Neri in his *Scenari delle Maschere in Arcadia*.<sup>9</sup> Neri publishes five scenarios from a ms. of Locatelli, dated 1622, and in his Introduction outlines other scenarios and calls attention to the general analogy they present to *The Tempest*. Unfortunately, Neri contents himself with a few of the most general points of similarity, and these not the most significant; and it is perhaps on this account that his book failed to receive the attention it deserved. Locatelli touched up these old scenarios and made them more suitable for stage presentation but claims no original authorship. Some of the scenarios seem to have been acted not only in Italy but abroad for a considerable period before they were collected and written down. If any of them appear as probable sources for *The Tempest*, there is no reason to doubt that Shakespeare could have seen them acted in London.

The scenarios printed by Neri show us the enchanted island of Arcadia, ruled by a magician who has spirits (sometimes satyrs) in his control. The magician raises a tempest and causes a shipwreck; and the strangers from the ship soon appear on the island,

<sup>8</sup> See *The Commedia dell'Arte* by Winifred Smith, chapter v. That the references to the Italian companies in England are mostly to the *commedia dell'arte* performances is conjectured by Professor Cunliffe (*Mod. Phil.*, iv, 602).

<sup>9</sup> Città di Castello, 1913.

each one thinking that he alone is saved and lamenting the loss of his companions. We watch the fortunes and the loves of these people, and the magicians' dealings with them. There are two groups of characters: those of noble birth, and the comic masks. At the end the fathers recognize their lost children and the lovers are united. In one of the plays, *Pantoloncino*, the magician says at the end that he will not exercise his art any longer, and throws away his staff and book.<sup>10</sup> This is the very framework of *The Tempest*. If there is sufficient evidence that Shakespeare drew directly upon the scenarios now to be examined, then it is a reasonable assumption that the first suggestion for writing a play about a magician on his enchanted island came from this source, and that he merely fitted to it some ready-made story of love and intrigue, just as he made use of the current interest in the Somers shipwreck in elaborating upon the opening storm. It is to be noted also that the crudity and unliterary character of these scenarios does not count against their probable influence. One must constantly visualize the action, if he would put himself into a position to judge truly.

Let us now consider certain more definite points of correspondence between *The Tempest* and the scenarios presented by Neri. The opening scene of *The Tempest*, showing a ship at sea, in imminent danger of being wrecked, with characters speaking from the deck, concluding with the sinking of the ship through the power of the magician who has raised the tempest, finds a parallel at every point in *La Nave* ('The Ship'). There we see the magician who rules the island conjuring the sea and producing a tempest in order to cause the Captain and Queen to be wrecked. Then the Captain and Queen are shown in the boat, lamenting, and calling for aid against the hazard of the sea. The magician causes the ship to go down, but the Captain and Queen are saved and presently appear again on the island. In this instance the scenes mentioned occur toward the close of the little drama; but in *Arcadia Incantata* ('Enchanted Arcadia') the play begins with the magician announcing the coming shipwreck of the strangers, and immediately thereupon the sea in a tempest and a shipwreck are shown. In *Li Tre Satiri* ('The Three Satyrs') the sea is shown, with ships on it, immediately after Pantalone has told of the wreck and

<sup>10</sup> Neri, Introduction, p. 16.

of the loss of his companions. The wreck is a feature of others of these scenarios. The idea of showing the actual tempest and shipwreck on the stage must surely have been derived from the *commedia dell' arte*; and this, therefore, and not the *Noches de Invierno*, would be the source of the magician's device of bringing other characters of the drama into his dominion.

I may mention in passing certain minor analogies which, though interesting in themselves, are conjectural and not determinative. Prospero's having rescued Ariel from a cloven pine and threatening to reconfine him in an oak, and more especially Caliban's

And here you sty me  
In this hard rock,

with Prospero's answer that he was

Deservedly confined into this rock,

though different in fact, could easily have been suggested by the frequent transformations of this sort in the *commedia dell' arte*. In *Li Tre Satiri* the magician changes Filli into a tree and Pantalone cuts the tree and frees her. In the same play Zanni comes from a rock and says he was transformed into it because he would not do what the old magician wanted him to do. At the close of *La Nave* the magician (an evil one in this instance) is changed into a rock; while in *Il Gran Mago* ('The Great Magician') Filippa is changed into a tree and Pantalone into an ass.<sup>11</sup> The grotesque horror of Caliban's attempted attack upon Miranda finds an equivalent in *La Pazzia di Filandro* ('The Madness of Filandro'), where a satyr loves a nymph and would carry her against her will to a grotto, and in *Pantaloncino*, where the magician rebukes his savage servant ("not exactly a satyr" says the stage direction) for his love of a nymph. There are other features which in the acting may have suggested more than we have any right to assume from these brief scenarios, such as Pantalone with his bottle of wine in *I Forestieri* ('The Strangers')<sup>12</sup> and the antics of the drunken clowns in *La Pazzia di Filandro*.

I come now to the curious analogies which the scenarios present to the story of Caliban and his confederates. In *La Pazzia di*

<sup>11</sup> I am not recording the many analogies these scenarios present to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and to other comedies of Shakespeare.

<sup>12</sup> Neri, Introduction, p. 23.

*Filandro* we read: "Gratiano talks about Zanni; he says he does not know whether he is a man or beast. He says he has a head and legs, but that the ass has just the same; finally he makes up his mind. We are reminded of the first entrance of Trinculo, in *The Tempest*. It will be recalled that he comes upon Caliban lying on the ground and questions whether the monster be a man or a fish: "Legg'd like a man! And his fins like arms! Warm, o' my troth! I do now let loose my opinion, hold it no longer: this is no fish, but an islander, that hath lately suffered by a thunderbolt." Trinculo creeps under Caliban's gaberdine to protect himself from the storm, and Stephano, the drunken butler, enters. On seeing the curious thing before him he says, "This is some monster of the isle with four legs." In *Li Tre Satiri* Pantalone is seeking his lost companions when he sees a whale, and from this whale comes out Burattino. Now it would be frankly absurd to offer this as a "source" for Stephano's pulling his comrade Trinculo out from under the cloak of the fish-like monster Caliban,—at least if it were necessary for a great poet to copy his "original" faithfully. But if Shakespeare witnessed this commediate dell' arte episode and found that it appealed to the crowd, there is no reason why it might not have suggested Stephano's amazed "Thou art very Trinculo indeed! How cam'st thou to be the siege of this moon-calf? Can he vent Trinculos?" In *Arcadia Incantata* the lost companions "recognize each other with buffoonery, touching each other." We do not know exactly what the stage business may have been, but we do know that it could not have been much different from the behavior of Stephano and Trinculo upon their mutual recognition:

*Trin.* If thou beest Stephano, touch me and speak to me; for I am Trinculo,—be not afeard—thy good friend Trinculo. . . .

*Steph.* Prithee, do not turn me about; my stomach is not constant.

Caliban takes Stephano for a god, would kiss his foot and bring him gifts; and later, before Prospero's cave, Stephano and Trinculo deck themselves in the "glittering apparel" they find upon the "line" or lime tree. In *Li Tre Satiri* the comic masks, Pantalone, Burattino and Zanni, also deck themselves in stolen finery, dressing as Jove, Cupid and Mercury, and are mistaken for the gods by Fausto and the shepherds, who pay them homage and bring them gifts. In *Il Gran Mago* and *La Nave* the magician

hangs garlands on a tree, which the comic masks find and put on.

This brings us to the essential point of the Caliban plot. Caliban asks Stephano for revenge on the tyrant and sorcerer who has cheated him of the island, promising,

Thou shalt be lord of it, and I'll serve thee.

The task, he says, will be easy, "having first seiz'd his books."

Cal.

Remember

First to possess his books; for without them  
He's but a sot, as I am, nor hath not  
One spirit to command. They all do hate him  
As rootedly as I. Burn but his books. . . .  
And that most deeply to consider is  
The beauty of his daughter. He himself  
Calls her a nonpareil. I never saw a woman  
But only Sycorax my dam and she;  
But she as far surpasseseth Sycorax  
As greatest does least.

Ste.

Is it so brave a lass?

Cal.

Ay, lord; she will become thy bed, I warrant,  
And bring thee forth brave brood.

Ste.

Monster, I will kill this man. His daughter and I will be king  
and queen,—save our Graces! and Trinculo and thyself shall be  
viceroys.

The securing of a magician's books in order to rob him of his power is common enough,<sup>13</sup> but this emphasis upon it in *The Tempest* is peculiar considering that nothing further is made of it. Let us follow, however, the story of *Li Tre Satiri*, remembering that it is this play on which we have already chiefly drawn for our analogies.<sup>14</sup>

The special significance of the point now to be considered involves another issue. There are some indications that *The Tempest* was revised in honor of the Princess Elizabeth's marriage in 1613, and that the wedding masque was not merely inserted at this time but took the place of more dramatic material. The evi-

<sup>13</sup> Mr. de Perott mentions an instance in the *Mirroure of Knighthood*, v, 368 (*Probable Source*, p. 215).

<sup>14</sup> The magician opens the play by telling of his wonderful powers. He is determined to punish the shipwrecked strangers. Filli then enters, and there is a scene between the old magician and the young girl. It is immediately after this that Pantalone enters, telling of the wreck and the loss of his companions. This comes the nearest of any of the scenarios to suggesting the *Tempest* sequence.



dence for this and the character of the piece as it may have existed in its original form in 1611 I have considered in another paper.<sup>15</sup> It is to my attempted reconstruction of the play in its earlier version that the following analogy holds; but there is enough remaining in the play as it stands to illustrate my point.

In *Li Tre Satiri* Pantalone and Zanni actually steal the magician's book from his cave. Like Caliban, they fear the spirits and the beatings with sticks they have received. They open the book to see its power. At once the satyrs appear, ready to obey them. They command, and the satyrs carry out their wishes. After witnessing the fortunes of other characters, we again find Pantalone and Zanni with the book, and the native shepherd Fausto in their power. He promises to serve them, and asks them to give him Filli for his wife. He urges them to punish the magician, who, he says, is the cause of all the ills of the place. The magician says he has foreseen the treachery and conspiracy against him, which is being made by the shepherds and strangers by means of his book. He makes a magic circle, into which the other characters are drawn, and thus brings them all into his power.<sup>16</sup> By this means he is able to recover his precious book. He then breaks the spell, the fathers recognize their lost children, and the lovers are united.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Read before the Modern Language Association at its meeting in Columbus, March, 1920. To be published later.

<sup>16</sup> Compare Prospero's similar expedient with Alonso and his followers.

<sup>17</sup> It is interesting to notice in this connection that at the end of *The Tempest* Prospero says to Ariel,

Set Caliban and his companions free,  
Untie the spell.

They are not, as the play now stands, put under a spell, but are being "hunted soundly" by the dog-seeming spirits. To this punishment are added, however, "dry convulsions" and "aged cramps," so there is no actual inconsistency. In *Li Tre Satiri* the characters are forced to dance in the magician's magic circle; but in *Arcadia Incantata* the magician charms them so that they stand immovable and he enters to them invisible, as Prospero does. The scenarios are so closely connected that it is impossible to doubt that the same company performed various numbers of the group. Shakespeare, if he was interested, may have seen their entire repertoire. These half impromptu and wholly unliterary productions could furnish him only with hints for his rich fancy; but that the hints were sufficient to account for the entire Caliban-Stephano-Trinculo story seems to me reasonably clear.

I am quite aware that Trinculo's coming out from the cloak of the fish-like monster Caliban is not the same thing as Burattino's entrance from the mouth of a whale, any more than Ariel's imprisonment in a tree is the exact equivalent of the *commedia dell'arte* transformations. I do not doubt Shakespeare's having heard both of Jonah and of Daphne. But when I visualize such a series of stage pictures as I have just outlined, in a drama group which also shows me a magician on his island, a tempest of his raising, a shipwreck actually portrayed, attendant spirits leading the strangers into a charmed circle, the fathers recognizing their lost children, and the magician finally relinquishing his power and throwing aside his staff and books, I am unable to doubt that we have in the scenarios the immediate source of *The Tempest*.

But Shakespeare, having this much, still needed more. What story should he tell about a magician on his island with shipwrecked strangers in his power? The names he chose for several of his characters indicate that he may have begun his search for a possible plot in Thomas's *Historye of Italye* and Eden's *History of Travaille*. History provides us with an Alonzo, King of Naples, whose son Ferdinand succeeded him to the throne; with a usurping Duke of Milan and a banished Duke of Milan; with "practices that he [Prospero Adorno, the Duke of Milan's lieutenant] held with Ferdinando, kyng of Naples."<sup>18</sup> The author of *As You Like It* needed no new source to suggest a duke banished by his usurping brother and restored to his dominion in the end. But what Shakespeare did not find in the accounts of Milan and of Naples was a suitable love story: a captive prince, the son of his usurping enemy (or of the confederate king), who should be set at menial tasks and prove himself a worthy husband for the magician's daughter. Since there is no evidence of Shakespeare's having drawn directly upon *Die Schöne Sidea* or the *Noches de Invierno*, and no indication that there even existed a parent source (for certainly the *Mirroure of Knighthood* will not do); and since on the other hand, a fellow-actor's description of the German play would be quite adequate for what there is left unaccounted for by way of plot, it seems to me that we must either take the Locatelli scenarios as the basic source of *The Tempest* or else suppose that Shakespeare had access to some older romance from which they

<sup>18</sup> Furness, pp. 343, 350.

also were derived.<sup>19</sup> And even if the source from which these scenarios were derived should be found, unless it provided material which is used in *The Tempest* and which does not appear in the scenarios, I should still think it more than probable that it was from the commedia dell' arte performances that Shakespeare derived the scheme of his play.

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### A SIXTEENTH-CENTURY SPANISH ANALOGUE OF *MEASURE FOR MEASURE*

The *Comedia del Degollado*, composed in four acts and in verse, by the Sevillian poet and dramatist Juan de la Cueva was first performed at Seville in the year 1579.<sup>1</sup> A brief analysis of the plot shows that this play deals with romantic incidents frequently found in sixteenth-century comedy and fiction. Arnaldo, a young officer, sets at liberty the Moor Chichivali, whom he had captured in a skirmish, on condition that the ransom money be sent to him within a certain time. Chichivali returns in person with the ransom and ill repays his captor's generosity by abducting Celia, Arnaldo's sweetheart, when dressed as a page she was about to attend a dinner offered by Arnaldo to certain other ladies. Arnaldo, heartbroken by the news of Celia's abduction, is carried off in another boat by one of Chichivali's companions, and the lovers meet at the court of the Moorish king. Chichivali finds it impossible to preserve the secret of Celia's disguise, and discloses her identity to the young Moorish prince, who at once becomes a rival

<sup>19</sup> Benedetto Croce suggested that "Shakespeare must have taken the name Trinculo from a Neapolitan drinking-song, and quoted an old *ritornello* in that dialect in support of his view:—

Tríncule míncule  
spilli e spillone . . ."

L. C-M. in the *Athenium* for March 20, 1915. This is the only review in English of Neri's book, so far as I am aware.

<sup>1</sup> This play is included in the first volume of the *Comedias y tragedias de Juan de la Cueva, publicadas por la Sociedad de Bibliófilos españoles*, 2 vols., Madrid, 1917, with an introduction by Francisco A. de Icaza. This publication is based upon the second edition, Seville, 1588, of the *Primera parte de las comedias y tragedias de Ioan de la Cueva*.